

Memorandum

TO Town of Herndon

COMPANY

DATE 26 October 2009

FROM Ivette Mongalo-Winston

PROJECT 1961: Herndon Downtown Master Plan

PURPOSE Summary of feedback from Trip #1: *Understanding*

REMARKS

Dana and Lisa,

The notes below represent feedback we received during our two days of meetings in Herndon. In preparation for next week, we will condense these notes into the most commonly heard points, and begin to prepare a memo of design principles to guide the process. Also attached at the end of focus group summaries is the summary of strengths, weaknesses, and visions from the public meeting on October 7.

Meeting Participants: Steering Committee

Date: 7 October 2009, 8am

What are the strengths of your Downtown

- government center, green space
- heritage of the railroad, adds character to downtown
- historic structures downtown that withstood the test of time
- Town Hall, old church on Pine St., Victorian Rose bank, Jimmy's, funeral home, fire house, ice house, Robert's carpet (to lesser extent), Friend's Meeting House (next to Fire Hall)
- wood buildings on Pine Street
- varying levels of historic significance: character vs. events that took place there; some uses worth commemorating event in a new building
- Artspace

REMARKS

- Open space:, municipal lot (Station St. lot)
 - Town Green
 - municipal golf course
 - trail (100 ft park running through downtown)
- First Baptist Church
- reasonable commute to DC, Reston
- The town has its own government
- close to major airport
- good transportation routes
- Herndon has nice sense of community that other communities don't
- Herndon has a real Town Center, authenticity
- schools tied to community (ex. Homecoming Parade), identifiable neighborhoods
- celebrations to commemorate sense of community, true small town parade
 - town festival (20,000 a day over four days): three stages of perf., business expo, crafts, midway, food vendors, hands on art program
 - Friday Night Live (summer concert series); series of concert series, usually at Town Green
- Herndon Parkway, visionary approach to traffic management, and traffic circulation, internal loop
- Possibility of future Metro link to DC
- people committed to improving Herndon

What are the town's weaknesses?

- underutilized space, only a few very successful retailers
- several large plots of land are vacant and poorly maintained while waiting for redevelopment, turn out to be an eyesore (need to be maintained)
- incompatible legacy uses (auto services, etc.) within a Main St. environment
- any retail that comes in has to deal with retrofitting buildings, no new construction available

REMARKS

- low retail rentals...encourage users that are not ideal
- lack of hardware store
- Pine Shopping Center
 - owner doesn't invest in it, but doesn't want to sell it
 - trashy, noisy mechanical unit, ugly
 - only one long term business (Tortilla Factory), and other tenants that come and go
 - 40-50% vacant; including bank building at the corner
- difficult traffic circulation
- not enough parking, not convenient to where you want to go (perception)
- zoned parking not enforced well, employees use prime retail parking
- utility lines
- Some sidewalks are too narrow
- asphalt yard behind the shopping center (50 yrs)
- don't have a complete place, just individual destinations

What are your visions for Downtown?

- preserve the downtown feel, make it know for its authenticity
- do not turn into Reston Town Cntr
- no highrises, no taller than three stories
- create something desirable enough to attract developers and businesses; identify why it hasn't happened up to this point
- anything that raises property values
- diversity of activities, types of place where you can spend all day and all night
- 24hr downtown
- connect shopping, recreation, entertainment
- Shopping doesn't have to be upscale but could be unique(Apalachian Spring)
- need critical mass to attract major businesses
- western Fairfax does not have a nightclub (ex. Jammin Java?, Vienna: coffee shop by day, convert to nightclub at night, teach music in day)

REMARKS

- downtown movie theater; maybe boutique size (4-6 screens)
- build on what we've inherited...place that transitioned from agriculture to town, build on history
- look at other towns that have been successful: Leesburg, old town Manassas, Oldtown City of Fairfax,
- more outdoor dining, pet friendly
- extended store hours (Annapolis does a good job)
- municipal govt. has to facilitate business practices that encourage more active street life

Meeting Participants: Council Members (Connie Hutchinson & Richard Downer)

Date and Time: 11:30am, 7 October 2009

- Biggest challenge will be finding consensus among a broad range of ideas
- currently Herndon has 50/50 mix of commercial and residential uses
- Town is recognized as doing most improvement along the trail

What are the strength of your Downtown?

- charming Downtown, small town uniqueness; something you wouldn't expect to find in the DC area, authenticity
- trail that also links to Potomac River trails
- Downtown functions as an entertainment venue
- proximity to airport & Reston (65,000 people)
- Future Metro line
- potential trolley connection to Worldgate Center
- Worldgate, Metro, and Downtown could become a three legged stool of activity
- 130 restaurants in town, have three "rush hours": morning, lunch, dinner

REMARKS

What are the weaknesses of your Downtown?

- Pine Shopping Center
- Depth of sidewalk precludes outdoor dining
- Downtown is small
- Street network that limits block structure
- Street network make it easy for people to fly through downtown
- No public parking on south side of Elden Street

What are your visions for Downtown?

- Pedestrian lighting for the trail
- Retail, restaurants, not lots of office
- Popular retail, something that will draw people
- Need a plaza for activity (maybe on Elden Street)
- A water feature
- Potential to daylight the stream through Downtown
- Movie theater
- Maintain consistent architectural character
- Pedestrian blocks with easy access to the Metro site
- An arts oriented approach (could reflect a certain period of architecture)
- A modest Arts Center (maybe 8-10k sf, should be in public ownership)

Focus Group 1: Transportation/ Town StaffDate and Time: 1:30-3pm, 7 October 2009*What are the strengths of your Downtown?*

- excellent public transit
- Location: easy to get to D.C., Reston, Loudon Co., Dulles airport
- Town has a history behind it, wasn't created like Reston
- Focus on community activities: parades, festivals, music, farmer's market
- Town provides remote parking and shuttle during special events

REMARKS

- Sited along the rail line between Vienna and Leesburg
- Farthest town west in Fairfax Co., so still enjoy the benefits of County Schools
- A walkable Downtown
- Open Spaces
- Municipal building
- Lots of bicycle activity
- Pedestrian activity that comes off of the trail (would like to see more)
- One of few places where people come out and interact, know their neighbors
- True sense of community

What are the weaknesses of your Downtown?

- Traffic issues in Downtown
 - bottleneck at Monroe St. towards Reston
 - new traffic signal at trail/ rail crossing has caused more confusion and back up
 - people still use Elden St. as a cut through (it also favors traffic rather than pedestrian, due to width and lack of sidewalks)
- Streets are not friendly to pedestrians and cyclist
- Right now people just come to eat and then leave, not enough to do
- Parking is inconvenient to destinations
 - no parking on south side of Elden St.
- Town needs to be more competitive to attract businesses here
- Town is vulnerable to a bad growth pattern
- Property owners have high expectations of what land is worth, there's a disconnect with what's possible to develop
- Nothing particularly magical in Downtown (like a water feature, bridge)
- Herndon has good daytime activities, but not enough evening activities

REMARKS

What are your visions for Downtown?

- A 24hr Downtown
- Convenient parking, and a mix of types: short and long term
 - learn from parking models at Reston (active ground floor use, activate the corners)
- Connect to the residential surrounding Downtown
- Redevelopment must connect to future Metro site
- Capitalize on traffic from the airport; people want a place to stay and spend
- Decide whether to become a regional destination or a local one
- A mix of activities for various demographics (families)

Focus Group #2A: Nearby ResidentsDate and Time: 3:30pm, 7 October 2009*What are the strengths of your downtown?*

1. Historic District
2. Bike Path - joggers, cyclists, rollerbladers
3. Very diverse population
4. Historic town center
5. Demographics are strong - affluence is here
6. Metro Station
7. Good sturdy foundation
8. Mom and pop businesses

What are the weaknesses of your downtown?

1. Illegal immigrant problem - Hispanics have a different way of life, hang outs for day labor
2. Zoning and HPRB both create roadblocks
3. Municipal procedures drive businesses away
4. What's the attraction of Herndon
5. Friday Night Live

REMARKS

What is your vision for downtown?

1. Preserve the Heritage
2. Bike Rental Shop
3. Underground utilities
4. Get back to horizontal rather than vertical development
5. Build residences that are compatible with all seasons of life
6. Herndon should maintain a single family character
7. Create a walking downtown
8. Walking paths and decent sidewalks
9. Keep a green character to the downtown
10. Go with smaller retail, boutiques, cafes
11. Kiosks on bike path
12. B&B's for the niche traveler
13. Cafes and boutiques that can't be found in Reston
14. Non-chain restaurants
15. Local coffee shop
16. Play up differentials from Reston
17. Shops with family homes above
18. Precedents - Manassas, Leesburg
19. Make a plan that endures the test of time
20. Bring in some stores that draw people to downtown
21. Come to shop, market, farmers market, night life, great restaurants, antique markets, kids activities, trail related activities, destination character
22. Look at Vienna
23. Tear down The Pines Shopping Center
24. A1 Bikes

REMARKS

Focus Group #2B: Nearby ResidentsDate and Time: 3:30pm, 7 October 2009*What are the strengths of your Downtown?*

- Good schools
- Sense of community
- Quiet neighborhoods
- Organization and participation of residents in community activities
- Town is governed well; police, fire
- Preserve small town character in spite of being very close to a large metro area, and the airport
 - people empowered to speak their mind
 - have easy access to public officials
- Character of the town, and its history, variety in architecture
- Have opportunities downtown, some vacant parcels
- Strong programming component, which make the Town a possibility to be great
- Don't need somewhere else to go, because there is plenty to do here
- Offers "Big City" events with neighborly interaction
- A variety of park types
- Interesting lot patterns; may have more than two neighbors, and this encourages more personal interaction
- Station Street, Breadworks
- W & O.D. Trail is a major asset to the region
- Community Center, tennis courts, ball field
- Town has three rush hours: morning, lunch, evening (restaurant crowd)

What are the weaknesses of your Downtown?

- Much of Downtown is not pedestrian friendly
- Herndon will be crushed by traffic with more development

REMARKS

- Difficult balance between natural areas and dedicated play areas
- Poor viability of existing Downtown (doesn't attract people)
- Too much redundancy in services
- Not enough senior housing, or programming for seniors
- Pine Shopping Center (debate about what if any should be preserved)
- Herndon Parkway is not well used
- Can't walk to Downtown
- Speed is the problem, not volume
- Unsafe for walkers and cyclist

What are your visions for Downtown?

- Parks dedicated to younger users
- Rooftop parks and gardens
- Build up a restaurant district
- Amenities for senior citizens
- Development that's financially viable
- Expand the town green
- Separate modes of traffic: bikes, peds., cars
- Connect to Lynn Street
- Improved connections and street network
- Kids fountain, skate park
- Bike store, fish market, hardware store
- Economic development team that strategizes on town-wide programming
- More festivals
- More green space
- Parking
- Bring more people Downtown, add residential
- Fill in the gaps in the fabric
- Maintain contributing structure that build character
- Consider the transition in scale between old and new development

REMARKS

- Place power lines underground
- Improved street lighting
- Something that makes you say “wow” when you enter Downtown
- Places for outdoor dining, or just to pause
- Deal with the Pine Shopping Center
- Expand Artspace, add a theater, perhaps a music venue

Meeting Participants: Council Members (Bill Tirrell & Dave Kirby)

Date and Time: 5pm, 7 October 2009

What are the strengths of your Downtown?

- Restaurants; really the only thing drawing people
- Town green, civic activities, Friday Night Live, Music Under the Stars, Nature festival, Wine and Jazz
- Town owned land (available space to build on)
- Core is small but surrounded by residential
- Core is centrally located, bike trail goes right through it
- Scale of Downtown makes it more suitable for small neighborhood scale retail, instead of big boxes
- Almost like a Neighborhood Center rather than a town center
- Elden St. could be good retail location given its visibility

What are the weaknesses of your Downtown?

- bike trail is traffic disrupter
- massive thru traffic along Elden
 - makes it difficult retail environment, people won't want to fight that traffic to get to destination retail
- in the past town has struggled with connectivity; residents have opposed connecting some trails and streets that would have eased things

REMARKS

General Background

- Russia House used to be a gas station
- The Closet was Model T assembly place
- JPI proposal...some people may insist on cultural arts center, parking
 - proposal needs to be economically feasible
 - land was valued at \$20.4 million (JPI proposal)
 - they were assuming town would pay for theater, parking, undergrounding of utilities, etc, rather see proposal that is funded without so much public investment
 - rather see amenities that people will really use
 - liked that they were assembling several parcels, had flexibility to shift densities
- Potential Arts Center
 - have to put forth proposal that will pay for amenities people want (that may mean more than three stories)
 - 12,000sf facility, capacity for theater, fine arts display area, serve as focal point for downtown
 - arts center siting was driven by available land; people just want to have one ...somewhere
- need 300 car public garage (feel they are parked out)
 - parking is to capacity in terms of what is allocated to a building, but not necessarily full all the time
 - no more parking to give away if someone wants to build new
- “vibrant” should be word associated with Herndon, not “quaint”
 - more vibrant retail- Chico’s

What are your visions for Downtown?

- need traffic circulation pattern that encourages people to move between various uses
- need a residential component downtown, maybe higher density; need it to

REMARKS

activate downtown after hours

Day 2

Meeting Participants: Planning Commission, and Heritage Preservation Review Board

Date and Time: 8am, 8 Oct 2009)

- Some uncertainty about which buildings should be kept or not (Artspace bldg, Subaru bldg)
- Premature to talk about individual buildings until we see what the whole downtown wants to be
- Redevelopment should build on historic character, scale should complement the existing buildings and not detract from it
- Need to establish the vision first, then set up the guidelines, etc.
- Bill Wright
 - friendly downtown area, centered on activities, exhibits, arts center hosting events, town theater (all in town scale)
- Some tension or disconnect between max FAR and desired town scale
- Historic Preservation Board went through whole exercise of ranking buildings as follows (2004):
 1. maintain facade
 2. maintain whole bldg
 3. bldg is not significant, redevelop whole block
- Some buildings are debatable: safeway/carpet building
- P.C.'s concern: have to deal with zoning and implications of changing it, don't want to downzone and have developers complain or sue because they thought they could get more for their land
- currently most of downtown is zoned CC- which implies max .5 FAR

REMARKS

- some of it has been rezoned to allow 2.5FAR and 50 feet height limit (includes municipal cntr, dairy queen, Diamond Hotel site)
- maybe solution is to look at form based code model for regulating height
 - cannot set up form based code that include incentives
- The more certainty the better to guide developers
 - establish the height and character that people want to see, so there's no doubt when developers consider developing here
- P.C. do want to build on arts community, doesn't have to be large performing arts center, but some sort of arts component, small theater, etc
- Find the nitch in the market and create the venue for it
- Lots of vacant land here is both a negative and a positive
- Don't have good egress and ingress into Herndon
- Don't want to lose the local people who shop here in order to attract a more regional market; watch gentrification.....overpricing properties

Focus Group: Downtown Businesses**Date and Time: 9:30-11:00am, 8 October**

Jeff Dick (Main St Bank)

- leases the space, largest tax payer in town of Herndon, only bank headquartered here
- have lease through 2014
- right now have 10,000sf, branch itself only needs 2800sf
- currently on the wrong side of the street, and parking is in the back
- crazy environment to run a business
- crepe myrtles and setback obscure visibility
- like the location, but have signage problem

REMARKS

Doug Landau (Station & Center St properties)

- been here 25 yrs
- during the 2001 charrette it became apparent that Herndon has a "No Growth" policy; no new building were built between 1990-2000
- Has tried to maximize use of the municipal building: for a while, were able to have judges hear cases in municipal facility; eventually town policies drove them out
- now have shifted to bad office parks
- have been trying to get A1 Cycling to move to Lynn St bldg
 - owner is difficult to negotiate with
- get the biker crowd off their bikes!!!! Get them to shop and eat downtown
- old pink bank: going to be occupied by Total Performance Coaching
 - get fitted to your bike, spinning classes
- used to have a movie theater
- parking: he pays into shared parking, based on total sf, not usable sf
- attracted 6200 visitors
- look at Stanley Martin homes on Station St
- Steve Mitchell: other developers are discouraged because not much happens

Chris Adams (funeral home, and residential house next to it)

- would like to stay in Herndon but having growing pains
- may move office functions to property next door
- access from Elden is a problem, have been asking for left turn lane (people get confused, turn down the trail thinking it's an entry)
- parking is a problem
- forecasting business to grow, so have to decide if they can fit here or have to look at another location
- big issue: town needs to give incentives to improve their properties;

REMARKS

- currently too many zoning hurdles, parking, etc
- town should think about a theme to rally downtown around
 - need a good hotel
 - Herndon has long tradition of struggling to get developers, then they get them and they leave,
 - business owners and locals are tired of things not happening
 - need to get a plan to stick to it; preservation board is major hurdle

Phil Orme(Mediterranean Breeze)

- would like to add more outdoor seating in the back (with smoking ban coming, may need it sooner)
- only concern is parking; during festivals or events parking is gone, and access is gone (streets closed)
- hurts carry out and delivery service
- Animal Hospital has leased them one space
- festival causes businesses to lose money (due to lack of access)
- business is down b/c people have less disposable income (have to keep offering deals)
- big issue with redevelopment is that town uses all vacant lots for parking, so master plan must deal with parking strategy

Anita Wallace (Dominion Animal Hospital)

- don't have plans right now
- did a major face lift; added brick, awnings, etc.; now not an eye sore
- been there since 1967 (bought practice in 1992, bought property in 2002)
- business pretty good, some up and down, service cats and dogs
- 15 employees, 4 doctors
- there's an old shed in the back that they want to replace with something more attractive

REMARKS

Robin Carroll- Artspace

- currently renting ½ of building
- back half of bldg used by Elden St players set construction & costume storage, and Town storage (festival)
- through lease have use of the lawn for arts activities
- Artspace funded by Herndon Foundation for the Cultural Arts; their mission is to establish performing arts center downtown bring together performing arts and visual arts
- right now performing arts venue is at Sunset Park Industrial Cntr
- want it to be large enough to hold both performing and visual, but smaller than before (6-12k sf); higher side would be 18k sf
 - 175 to 250 seats
 - existing theater at Sunset Park is 100 seats (sim to black box theater with small side wings, but have no back stage)
- 3 components: gallery, theater, rehearsal space (if you allow for rehearsal space, you can use the rest of space more frequently)
- current lease is until Dec 2010, will probably have to extend it before getting new facility
- current bldg is 6k sf
- initially was looking at arts cntr as public facility, now moving towards a more privately funded model; may look to Town to do less, maybe provide land, help with the shell
- need paid staff (at least three right now) to manage facility; stretching what they can do with volunteers
- publicly supported art comes with too many strings, censorship, etc.
- view themselves as more museum model rather than retail gallery
- currently foundation is a 501C3; supported by donations and grants
- Elden St Players are usually sold out, critically acclaimed, started 25 yrs ago in incubator facility...time to move on.
- have diverse set of plays, don't just put on what's popular at the time,

REMARKS

- have strong children's theater
- need better signage and visibility

Tom Owen- white cinder block bldg on Center St

- Herndon Iron Works (brother owns) and Owen Companies (wrought iron rails)
- been there 50 yrs
- Vision: would like to do European style iron works business, would like to live there (have to convince wife and brother)
- currently manufacture and sell products there (for people who know where it is, but don't have display area)
- would like to add display area, add a story and a half
- also open to selling
- Rotenberg, Germany (precedent)
- what's great about Herndon is you can walk to so many things: housing, commercial
- look at bldg next to Clock Works on Pine St (city liked how that turned out)

Peter Ahmed- national business strategy co., property across Harvest Bread

- has approved project, working with anchor tenant
 - small market: anything you need for lunch, breakfast, dinner; cooking, prep
 - mixed-use bldg, three stories, outdoor dining
 - 25,000sf, could have retail on ground floor
 - third floor could be office
 - have parking allocated already
 - 5000sf prepared food component, seating upstairs

REMARKS

Miscellaneous

- Consider potential daycare on Va power site or next to Fortnightly buildings (Center St. frontage)

Meeting Participants: Councilman and Mayor (Charlie Waddell & Mayor Steve DeBenedittis)

Date and Time: 11:15am, 8 Oct 2009

- Streetsense to project proprietary demand dollars- determine what capture rate you can achieve
- Charlie: how long will it take this downtown to complete itself?
 - can start within 1-3 yrs from the point where a plan is adopted
 - what will decide the plan? People's opinion or the market study
 - Asheville
 - concern about on line purchasing
 - Cary St., they have something going, how did they do it (dedicated people that want to live, shop and play in that neighborhood)
 - maybe a small dinner theater with live performance, or a draft house (Arlington), brew pub
 - towns typically have a brand, what is it here?, need an icon
 - want to compete with types like Manassas, not Reston
 - what scale or density do you see here to meet the city's expectations about value?
 - need to distill myth about what FAR is really achievable and what it looks like
 - how much residential product can the downtown support? Does it need to be the catalyst for revitalization? (probably)
 - what percentage of redevelopment should be residential?

REMARKS

Mayor:

- wrote letter to solicit retailers, but right now don't have much good space to move them into, want to see the master plan through first
- second floor balcony would be great on spring st where parade goes through
- don't want grade separated crossing for bikers...want them to stop here
- need to clearly communicate to people that how much you build, and how tall, impacts the amenities you get back

General Comments:

- Cluster activities together: theater, movies, food, beverage
- Look at other trail examples to deal with safe crossings
- Branding around bike/trail culture...could be rail spokes to bike spokes
- There's a delicate balancing act between land, hard cost, income: three factors that impact success of development
- A safe assumption for current absorption: 15 to 18 units a month
- Pine Shopping Cntr: maybe about 60-80k sf, if redeveloped at a reasonable density, could get 240 units
- Cater to the young professionals currently living in scattered new complexes; they have nowhere to go

Focus Group #4: Developers and Landowners**Date and Time: 1:30-3pm, 8 October**

Norman Horn

1. Norman operated an auto parts store on Elden Street and owns the building and land.
2. He sold the business and has a 3 year lease with the operator with an option to renew.
3. He would consider redevelopment (he was part of a previous

REMARKS

redevelopment effort) that would include office, residential, high end apartments (100,000 sf)

4. He was part of the JPI proposal that ran into a buzz saw in Herndon

Ron Ashwell

1. He owns the car dealership building and adjacent land. He has a lease with the Subaru Dealership and is concerned about the future.
2. He also was part of the JPI effort and believes the town has too many boards, too much politics, and no stream lining for development efforts.
3. He believes the Architectural Review Board and Heritage Preservation Review Board are not needed for review of development proposals. The review process is too lengthy.
4. Current review of development proposals requires a rezoning process:
 - a. Submission to Town Staff
 - b. Submitted to HPRB informally. They write a review for the Planning Commission
 - c. Planning Commission hearing, review and recommendation
 - d. Town Council hearing, review and approval
 - e. Site Plan process to meet technical requirements
 - f. Review by the Planning Commission for hearing, review and recommendation
 - g. Town Council hearing, review and approval
 - h. Formal presentation to HPRB

If no zoning change is required, the submission goes through the site plan process.

Harvest Bread

1. Been there for 15 years and one of the towns major draws

REMARKS

2. Need more retail in the downtown
3. They liked the hotel proposal

Kevin

1. Wealth management company on Pine Street
2. Has 2,000 sf of finished office space.
3. Consolidate the layers to get something from A-Z to allow people the opportunity to grow a small business.
4. Get the town teed up. Try to find a way to to eliminate and consolidate steps in redevelopment

Focus Group #5: Residents (Part II)

Date and Time: 1:30-3pm, 8 October

- Included residents along Monroe Street, Vine Street, Jefferson Street

What are the strengths of your Downtown?

- Small town feel, which continues today
- Safe and secure environment
 - quick response time by police and fire
 - police play positive role in community
 - public works is very reliable; snow plowing, trash
- Unique setting, centrally located, easy to find
- Parkway helps to disperse traffic
- Lots of community activities (festivals, Friday Night Live, Rally in the Alley)
- Have history of strong clubs that built community (Optimist Club, Garden Club, Moose Lodge, Rotary)
- Lots of fun events, parties
- Municipal Center, Town Green, library
- Jimmy's, Mediterranean Breeze
- Everyone know each other
- Bike trail

REMARKS

What are the weaknesses of your Downtown?

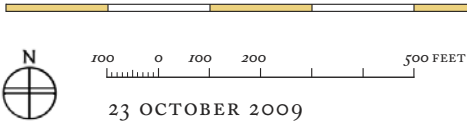
- Traffic along Elden Street; gets blocked by left turns, the trail light, funeral processions
- Lack of a cohesive character between buildings (developed a various times)
- Eclectic architecture that doesn't match
- Not enough of a draw to Downtown
- Pine Shopping Center
- Bike trail divides Downtown; it creates traffic hazards
- Lack of sufficient parking, or convenient parking
- Speeding is a problem on residential streets
- Sidewalks are too narrow
- Flooding is a problem
- Soil is rocky, water problems,

Miscellaneous:

- 42% of residents are Hispanic, need to be represented in the Planning process
- working class must be heard
- Summer season is more active, winter is less so
- Don't let Herndon become Reston

What are your visions for your Downtown?

- A central draw for Downtown
- Small businesses, gift shop, sandwich shop, café for bikers, boutiques
- A hotel
- Alternatives
- Create enough density to make it work, but not too much to overpower it
- Need quality development
- Build a beautiful place
- Rather not give away land
- Five stories is too high here
- A pedestrian area





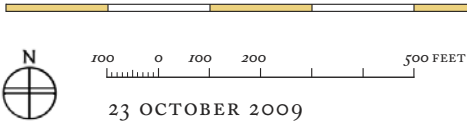
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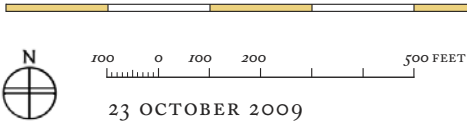
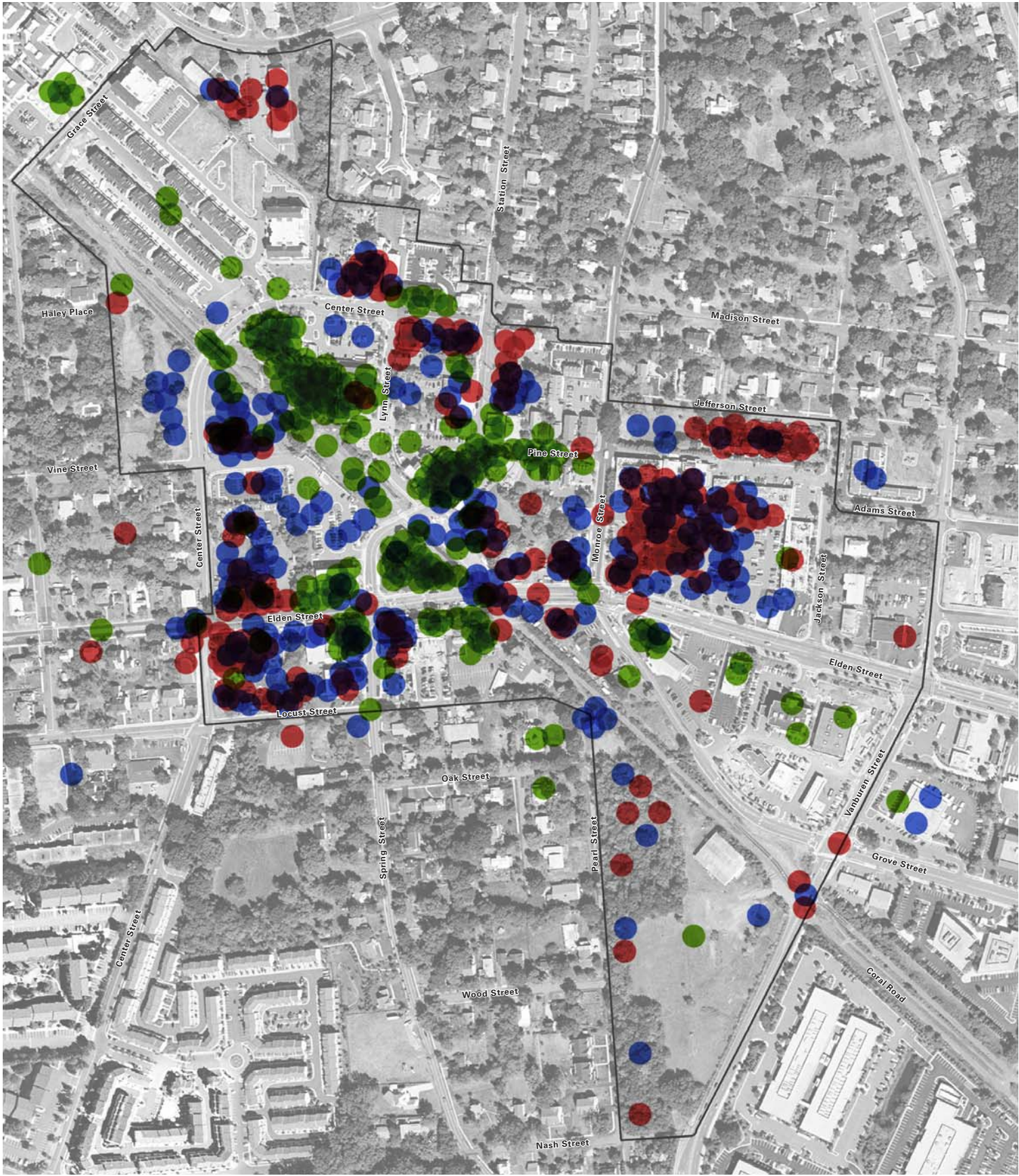
23 OCTOBER 2009

URBAN DESIGN ASSOCIATES

Weaknesses

Downtown Master Plan | Herndon, Virginia





1961 Herndon

Public Meeting: 7 October 2009

Dot Exercise Summary (Strengths, Weaknesses, and Visions)

Strengths

- Town has sense of center
- Town green, public open spaces and parks
- History, heritage, and strong local identity
- Feel and charm of town
- Downtown is walkable and within easy walking distance surrounding neighborhoods
- Municipal presence: government and services at center of town
- Numerous restaurants
- Great Harvest Bread Co.
- Jimmy's
- Successful and popular town events- festival, Friday Night Live, farmers market
- Friendly people who volunteer a lot
- Diverse population- age, ethnic and national backgrounds, income
- "Universality in building structure"- aesthetic appeal, brick buildings
- Interesting streetscapes- mix of old and new buildings, historic buildings
- Availability of developable land, open space, infill sites
- Bike trail, reminder of railroad and reason for town's establishment and growth
- Downtown "not oppressive" like Reston Town Center
- Incorporated as town- local decision-making, local public services and police
- Community center
- Library
- Golf course
- Senior center
- Healthy variety of housing options, prices
- Nice older houses
- Different types of businesses, large and small
- Town museum at old train station
- Uniqueness of pedestrian experience
- Diversity of housing stock
- Town resisted urge to widen streets, maintained unique downtown street network
- Public transit
- Proximity to Dulles Int'l Airport, DC
- Future potential of Metro

Weaknesses

- Downtown is "dead in the evening"- not a destination, no nightlife
- Need downtown economic advisor
- No business organization for downtown retailers
- Lack of strong retail core, diversity of shops
- Lacks sidewalk seating
- Lack of civic and political focus and vision for what town wants to be
- Overabundant overhead utility lines are eyesore

- Pine Shopping Center- not well-maintained, feels unsafe
- Vacant shops, lots
- Lack of cohesive architectural style
- Newer downtown buildings not well executed
- Traffic and congestion problems (especially Elden and Monroe)
- Narrow local streets with limited connectivity- requires zig-zagging
- Elden Street intersections are dangerous- “a pedestrian nightmare”
- Drainage and stormwater issues
- Metro extension plan could hinder downtown’s future, increase competition
- Sidewalks- narrow and not well maintained, often missing
- Deteriorating condition of some downtown buildings
- Utilities, especially water mains, may not have capacity to accommodate growth
- Lack of consensus about development
- Loitering by day-laborers
- Lack of lighting in certain parking lots
- No coffee shop
- No performing arts center or theater
- Taxes and duplicated services (Fairfax County + Town)
- Asphalt plant/construction waste yard is inappropriate use within downtown
- Poor maintenance of local streets
- Pine Street too narrow

Visions

- Work on charm and continuity
- Downtown needs to be approachable, not imposing
- Continue town festivals
- Limit building heights to 3 stories, no higher than Old Town Hall, especially near historic buildings
- Elden to Locust could be 4-5 stories, 7 story max for commercial buildings downtown
- Mixture and diversity of building heights, like Bethesda Row
- Promote sustainable development, pursue LEED certification
- 24 hour downtown with more nightlife
- Performing arts theater
- Full mix of uses
- Added economic value to downtown benefits entire community
- Maintain village feel
- Get an inn or hotel downtown
- Pedestrian friendly- connect entire downtown to itself and solve disconnect between north-south, east-west
- Improve the sidewalks
- Be creative with parking- structured and below ground if needed
- Needs focal point- town green only half complete
- Discover social and civic niche for town to fill
- Install fountain at center of town
- Celebrate Herndon’s heritage and how town’s story has changed over time
- Coffee shop

- More specialty retail- gifts, books, bike, clothing, meat market
- Improved public transit system- better routes, more stops, connect to community center
- Preserve green space and expand town green across bike trail to Art Space
- A good bar
- Include history tour
- Add bike lanes on Elden
- Improve traffic signal timing at intersections for pedestrians, bike trail users
- Attract small college or higher education facility
- Add trees and landscaping throughout downtown
- Clean up shopping center
- Remove street parking around square at train station to create plaza
- Increase number of trash bins/recycling bins on streets
- Rethink overall downtown traffic patterns